

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



June 14, 2010

Michael Kundu
School Board Director
Marysville School District
4220 80th Street Northeast
Marysville, WA 98270-3498

Dear Director Kundu:

We are indignant and outraged to read your inflammatory comments on “race and [educational] achievement” in a June 3, 2010 electronic message, circulated at your request. We unequivocally denounce your assertion that “there is a definitive factor played by racial genetics in intellectual achievement.” We also take offense to your insinuation that only certain vocational fields contribute to the benefit of humankind. As state legislators who recognize a solemn responsibility to serve *all* students in Washington State, we find that these reprehensively fatalistic views of human potential and endeavor undermines the essential purpose of public education and, given your elected position, poses a grave threat to the future well-being of our citizenry and our communities.

The Washington State Legislature recognizes the serious menace to our social progress and economic prosperity posed by a persistent and pernicious academic achievement gap between different student populations. In 2008, we commissioned five independent research studies to analyze existing data on disparate academic performance and to make recommendations for closing the achievement gap pursuant to the goals of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Notably, these studies identified resource deficiencies such as the need for cultural competency training and the lack of multicultural curricula, not intellectual deficiencies, as the key barriers to learning for children of color.

The Legislature subsequently created the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (AGOAC) to continue our focus on and to prioritize state efforts to address the educational inequities that lead to poor student outcomes. We strongly urge you to familiarize yourself with the conclusions of the achievement gap studies and the ongoing work of the AGOAC. While you can access the information online at www.k12.wa.us/AchievementGap, we are quite willing to facilitate a time for you to meet with AGOAC staff to discuss these matters in person.

As an elected leader in the Marysville School District, you play a highly visible role in the broad public dialogue about the educational needs and aspirations of every student in your community. It is a responsibility acknowledged in your Board vision and value statements: *Every child has the potential to achieve success in life if given the right tools to do so... We must constantly help each other stay focused on that most important goal, the education and support of children in our community.* We are deeply concerned that, despite these lofty proclamations, your opinions and perspectives shared via e-mail will dishearten and discourage many young people from striving for academic excellence.

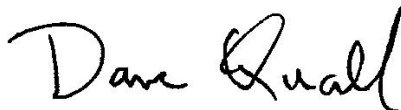
The students entrusted to your charge deserve your unconditional support for and express confidence in their academic pursuits. Indeed, no matter the ethnicity, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, mental or physical ability, or economic status of a child in your public schools, each one is entitled to the same educational opportunities. Mr. Kundu, as a member of the Marysville School Board, you at least owe your students a sincere apology for your inappropriate and injurious claims. We expect that you will take immediate steps to engage the young people of your District in a direct and unambiguous conversation about your commitment to them and to their education. Your failure to confront any doubt in their minds about your ability to serve all students without bias will simply add insult to injury and will earn our continued condemnation.

We trust that you will act with honor in bringing closure to this appalling incident.

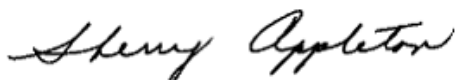
Sincerely,



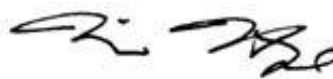
Sharon Tomiko Santos
State Representative, 37th District



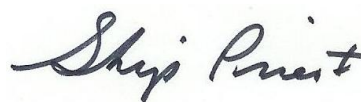
Dave Quall
State Representative, 40th
Chair
House Education Committee



Sherry Appleton
State Representative, 23rd District



Mike Hope
State Representative, 44th District



Skip Priest
District State Representative, 30th District
Ranking Member
House Education Committee



Maralyn Chase
State Representative, 32nd District



Representative Judy Clibborn
State Representative, 41st District



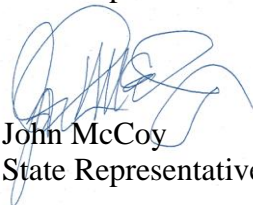
Bruce Dammeier
State Representative, 25th District



Bob Hasegawa
State Representative, 11th District



Marko Liias
State Representative, 21st District



John McCoy
State Representative, 38th District



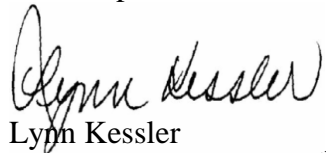
Tina Orwall
State Representative, 33rd District



Eric Pettigrew
State Representative, 37th District



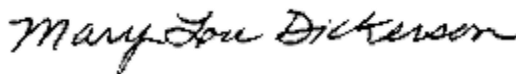
Pat Sullivan
State Representative, 47th District



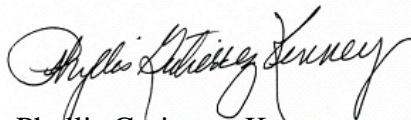
Lynn Kessler
State Representative, 24th District
Majority Leader



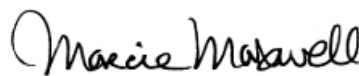
Eileen Cody
State Representative, 34th District



Mary Lou Dickerson
State Representative, 36th District



Phyllis Gutierrez-Kenney
State Representative, 46th District



Marcie Maxwell
State Representative, 41st District



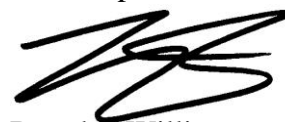
Dawn Morrell
State Representative, 25st District



Kevin Parker
State Representative, 6th District



Geoff Simpson
State Representative, 47th District



Brendan Williams
State Representative, 22nd District

cc: The Honorable Sherri Crenshaw, President, Marysville School District Board of Directors
The Honorable Cindy Erickson, Vice President, Marysville School District Board of Directors
The Honorable Darci Becker, Marysville School District Board of Directors
The Honorable Chris Nation, Marysville School District Board of Directors
Superintendent Larry Nyland, Marysville School District
The Honorable Randy Dorn, Superintendent, State of Washington, Office of Superintendent of
Public Instruction